

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/591,508
Amendment dated April 28, 2004
Reply to OA of February 3, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 2, 7, 9 and 15 - 17 have been amended in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter to which the applicants regard as their invention. The applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added. It is believed that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated February 3, 2004.

Claims 2 - 5, 7, 9 - 12 and 5 - 17 remain in this application. Claims 1, 6, 8, 13 and 14 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer.

As to the merits of this case, claims 2 - 5, 7, 9 - 12 and 15 - 17 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) based on Kazuaki (JP10-296018) in view of Masao (JP10-175172). The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

The primary reference of Kazuaki teaches a cleaning device, wherein subsequent contaminant particle within a processing liquid is initially removed by a separator 1; then, having the remaining

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/591,508
Amendment dated April 28, 2004
Reply to OA of February 3, 2004

contaminant particle removed by an amorphous filter 2. Finally, a mesh filter 3 is used to further remove the residual contaminant particle. Without having cited specifically where in Kazuaki the Examiner specifically relies on for teaching, e.g., the applicants' claimed third step, the Examiner has taken the position that:

magnetic coagulation of the remaining magnetic particles in the liquid would be an inherent result of allowing the liquid to settle in the sedimentation tank, since particles of the workpiece are polarized and would naturally tend to agglomerate in the absence of agitation.¹

As to the secondary reference of Masao, the Examiner relies on this reference for, in the absence of its teaching in the primary reference of Kazuaki, disclosing "such superabrasive grinding wheels ... for use in grinding high-hardness materials such as rare earth magnets."²

The applicants respectfully submit that Kazuaki and Masao, even if can be combined in the manner suggested by the Examiner, would still fall far short in fully meeting the applicants' claimed invention. In order to help expedite the processing of this application, the applicants have however further amended the claims in order to further distinguish over the teachings of Kazuaki and Masao, singly or in combination.

¹See, lines 1 - 4, page 3 of the outstanding Action.

²See, lines 6 - 9, page 3 of the outstanding Action.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/591,508
Amendment dated April 28, 2004
Reply to OA of February 3, 2004

Based on the above and the amended claims filed herewith, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not have found the applicants' claimed invention obvious under 35 USC 103(a) based on Kazuaki and Masao, singly or in combination.

Accordingly, the withdrawal of the outstanding obviousness rejection under 35 USC 103(a) based on Kazuaki (JP10-296018) in view of Masao (JP10-175172) is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/591,508
Amendment dated April 28, 2004
Reply to OA of February 3, 2004

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

ARMSTRONG, KRATZ, QUINTOS,
HANSON & BROOKS, LLP



Mel R. Quintos
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 31,898

MRQ/lrj/ipc

Atty. Docket No. **000736**
Suite 1000
1725 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 659-2930



23850
PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE